



The National Map — The Eastern Washington—Northern Idaho Pilot Project

The Nation Needs *The National Map*

Governments depend on a common set of geographic base information as a tool for economic and community development, land and natural resource management, and health and safety services. Emergency management and defense operations rely on this information. Private industry, nongovernmental organizations, and individual citizens use the same geographic data. Geographic information underpins an increasingly large part of the Nation's economy.

Available geographic data often:

- Do not align with each other because layers are frequently created or revised separately,

- Do not match across administrative boundaries because each producing organization uses different methods and standards, and

- Are not up to date because of the complexity and cost of revision.

The USGS is developing *The National Map* to be a seamless, continuously maintained, and nationally consistent set of online, public domain, geographic base information to address these issues. *The National Map* will serve as a foundation for integrating, sharing, and using other data easily and consistently.

In collaboration with other government agencies, the private sector, academia, and volunteer groups, the USGS will coordinate, integrate, and, where needed, produce and maintain base geographic data.

The National Map will include digital

orthorectified imagery; elevation data; vector data for hydrography, transportation, boundary, and structure features; geographic names; and land cover information. The data will be the source of revised paper topographic maps.

Many technical and institutional issues must be resolved as *The National Map* is implemented. To begin the refinement of this new paradigm, pilot projects are being designed to identify and investigate these issues. The pilots are the foundation upon which future partnerships for data sharing and maintenance will be built.

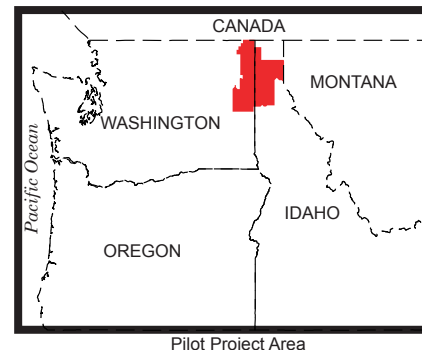
The Eastern Washington—Northern Idaho Pilot Project

The USGS has approved a National Map pilot project for a four-county area in the Pacific Northwest that includes Spokane and Pend Oreille Counties in Washington and Kootenai and Bonner Counties in Idaho. This pilot will test essential characteristics of *The National Map* concept and examine the value of the resulting data sets to a diverse user group.

The geographic heart of the pilot area is the population and commerce corridor stretching from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene. This corridor is important to the overall economic success of the region and provides a solid test market for *The National Map* in an area with a long-established map-user base. Relationships that the USGS has established over time with other federal, State and local agencies in this corridor will be enhanced through the pilot effort, which will become a model for advancing *The National Map* initiative across the Pacific Northwest.

This pilot also provides an opportunity for the USGS to create new partnerships in rural areas presently lacking solid geospatial information, particularly in Pend Oreille and Bonner Counties north of the Spokane—Coeur d'Alene corridor. Representatives from these counties are looking forward to working with the USGS to enhance and expand upon their geospatial data.

Like many cities in the western United States, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene are experiencing rapid commercial and urban growth along with the expansion of tourism. Planning and managing such growth is a major task for the many city, county, State, federal, and private organizations. Accompanying this rapid growth are increased environmental pressures on water quality and quantity, increased wildfire liability, and increased human pressures on the native plants and animals. Such issues require natural-resource managers and urban-planning professionals to increase geospatial-data applications to support their management activities. Although acquisition and distribution of some geospatial data used in the area are accomplished through coordinated State councils, most data are generated and maintained by individual agencies and organizations to meet individual missions.





The time is right for the USGS to take a more active role in the coordination of geospatial data needs in the area to help create integrated, readily accessible data sets that are maintained on a regular basis. This pilot offers the USGS a prime opportunity to fully engage with organizations already working on the challenges of gathering and maintaining basic geospatial data in the area. In particular, the geospatial information councils established in both Washington and Idaho are the lead organizations addressing data-coordination issues in their individual States. The Washington Geographic Information Council is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the use and development of the State's geospatial information, including digital orthoimagery, elevation, transportation, hydrography, governmental units, and cadastral data. The Idaho Geospatial

Committee is comprised of 16 members from local, State, federal, and private organizations whose mission is to provide policy guidance and promote resource allocation for matters related to geographic information. The USGS is represented on both councils and can facilitate the integration of the data needs of *The National Map* with the regional geospatial data requirements.

Initial meetings were held to introduce *The National Map* concept, and enthusiasm is generally high. Representatives from potential data partners, including the U.S. Forest Service, the four counties, several State agencies, and a private utility, are interested in data-sharing agreements. Nonprofit environmental organizations concerned with specific geographic areas want to be involved in volunteer efforts to maintain appropriate data layers.

Representatives from county-based Emergency 911 calling centers in the area are especially interested in USGS support of more accurate transportation and structures data. Regional contacts at the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are involved in National Map discussions and are assessing how to best align their geospatial-data objectives with the goals of *The National Map*.

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Continue to work with local, State, and federal agencies and groups to solidify and formalize data-sharing agreements
- ▶ Formalize the pilot-project work plan with USGS authorities to ensure that data sets being tested in this pilot meet national objectives
- ▶ Continuously update USGS authorities and non-USGS collaborators about the status of the project
- ▶ Document findings from the pilot throughout the year so that the results will enhance implementation of *The National Map* program throughout the Pacific Northwest and across the country
- ▶ Gather and assemble available data from various sources
- ▶ Develop and test map services

More Information About The Eastern Washington–Northern Idaho Pilot Project

Tracy Fuller
U.S. Geological Survey
230 Collins Road
Boise, ID 83702
tfuller@usgs.gov
(208) 387-1351

More Information About *The National Map*

We welcome your comments on *The National Map* mission and strategies. You may view and download the full report at <http://nationalmap.usgs.gov>. Please share your thoughts about the vision with USGS by e-mail at nationalmap@usgs.gov or by mail to USGS-National Map, MS-511 National Center, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192.